

Good evening, this is First Selectman, Jayme Stevenson with a COVID-19 update for August 19<sup>th</sup>. As we approach the start of a new school year and with cases on the rise statewide, it is time for a community update.

Since July 1, Darien has experienced 66 COVID cases. Health officials tell us to assume the majority of new cases are the Delta variant. We are experiencing “breakthrough” cases here in Darien but vaccines appear to be helping to reduce the severity of COVID symptoms. The good news is that we have had no new hospitalizations since July 1 and, of those eligible to be vaccinated, 88% of our community is fully vaccinated. 86% of our eligible students aged 12-17 are fully vaccinated as well. Local COVID-19 data reports are posted weekly on the Town of Darien website.

The Governor has mandated that all staff in long-term care and hospital settings must be vaccinated by 9/7. Today, he announced that all pre K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade school teachers and staff in both public and private schools as well as staff in all childcare settings are mandated to be vaccinated by 9/27 or submit to weekly testing.

Moderna and Pfizer booster shots for folks who are immunocompromised are available now. You must be at least 8 months from receipt of the last shot in your initial vaccine series. Boosters for the general public are anticipated to be available by the end of September. Plans for offering local booster clinics is underway.

We are still waiting for FDA authorization for vaccines for children under the age of 12.

Darien Public Schools will be opening under as normal a scenario as is possible. Masks must be worn indoors but not outside and appropriate distancing will be required. Weekly testing opportunities will be available for K-6 students and K-12 staff. All interscholastic athletics are beginning on schedule.

While the Governor has given local governments the option to mandate mask wearing in all local business and restaurant settings, local case data does not yet support the need for imposing that mandate. We evaluate local policy decisions on a daily basis. All businesses have the ability to impose their own mask requirements.

Please watch the weather for updates on Tropical Storm Henri and its possible impacts this weekend in our area. Best wishes to all students as you return to school. I wish you a successful and healthy 2021-22 school year!

Thank you.